

MEETING NOTE

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		Junior Ministers - Covid19 Executive Office - Sectoral Engagement – Retail – 9 Dec 2021																									
VENUE:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:	N/A																								
LIST OF ATTENDEES:																											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minister	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PS																									
ATTENDEES:	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Aodhan Connolly</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>Peter Luney</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>Jayne Brady</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>Glyn Roberts</td><td>Jane Holmes</td></tr> <tr><td>Junior Minister Declan Kearney</td><td>Dara O'Hagan</td></tr> <tr><td>Tanya McCamphill</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>NR</td><td>Prof Ian Young</td></tr> <tr><td>Junior Minister Gary Middleton</td><td>DFI Private Office</td></tr> <tr><td>NR</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>NR</td><td>NR</td></tr> <tr><td>NR</td><td>Karen Person</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>NR</td></tr> </table>			Aodhan Connolly	NR	Peter Luney	NR	Jayne Brady	NR	Glyn Roberts	Jane Holmes	Junior Minister Declan Kearney	Dara O'Hagan	Tanya McCamphill	NR	NR	Prof Ian Young	Junior Minister Gary Middleton	DFI Private Office	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	Karen Person		NR
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Jayne Brady opened meeting and apologies for running late.

JM Kearney reiterated that it was always planned to have this meeting but the status has changed reflected as HOCS is chairing the meeting. Now in a very dangerous situation and deteriorating situation because the Omicron variant is now here. Whilst that is not unexpected the emergence of Omicron is becoming increasing concerning. It is our understanding, from the CMO & CMA assessment and modelling this variant is more transmissible variant than Delta. At the moment Delta remain the dominate variant here. Omicron will displace Delta as dominate variant. The situation is going to be kept under ongoing and careful and ongoing surveillance. The messaging is we are going to have to do everything possible to reduce infection rates and to slow down levels of community transmission.

Looking towards a renewed focus on cohesive public messaging to reinforce the importance of safe behaviours.

Accept that it is early days. Recognise that communication is vital. Need to maximise Vaccine uptake including boosters, and push on low cost measures. Very much appreciate what your sector has done, could not do this with sectors help. Recognise that we need more help from the sector in this period. No financial support presently for further restrictions.

Executive focus is how sector remains open and normal as possible and safe to do so.

Need greater adherence to:

- Face coverings
- Effective Ventilation
- Use of sanitation stations at entrance points

- One way systems
- Proper implantation of Covid Certification

Recognise that this sector pioneered some of these measures 18 months ago. Need to go back to those measures ago. Asking for sector's help in doing between now and the New Year.

Messaging everyone on the importance of vigilance - everyone can and needs to play their part to slow down this variant by following safer choices messages. Recognise that the sector relies heavily on Christmas trade. Reality is need to double down on effort. There is the possibility that we could be over run by this variant.

Building on this cooperation and collaboration with sector.

JM Middleton welcomed all on the call and echoed JM Kearney's points. Omicron variant now in a dangerous place. Encourage people not to panic. Executive is coming at this objectively. Taking on board sector views, this is opportunity to engage with sector directly. The next few weeks we have an opportunity.

Thank sector for the work on partnership working in the past period. The actions taken so far to reduce transmission have had an impact. Omicron has the potential to spread rapidly. Executive meeting this afternoon.

Health system is under significant pressure.

Need to take preventive action now. Booster programme has been helped. Complacency we can't afford to have and need to have more compliance. Communication is one of the key points that has been raised with Ministers.

HOCS opened up meeting to sectors.

Glyn Roberts – launched the Christmas safe shopping yesterday. Went out to 2000 members and resource available to anyone on website to download. Taking out Facebook ads to push messaging with customers. Messaging is so important. Need to be part of Ministers messages, reinforcing it. Reinforce that our high street and retail is open. EIS to come back on what joining messaging can be down.

HOCS – recognise messaging and communication is a key theme. Joint up messaging is important and will ask EIS to come back on what we can down on this.

Aodhan Connolly – two weeks ago messaging. Weekly meeting with members. More adherence is happening. Big difference this time around from the customer refusing quoting personal freedom or civil liberties. Increase of attacks on retail workers. People are entering premises looking for a reaction from workers. Impacting on security staff, number resigning. Security guards are employed for shop lifting not dealing with not complying with measures. Messaging is key. Not complying individuals needs to be looked.

NR – Interesting have kept more measures within shopping centre. Of late adherence has deteriorate. Sense that those who are double jabbed and possibly boosted feel that they are immune

from measures. Or if already having Covid again then thinking that they are excluded from measures. Recognise that people are tired and what is helping in England is not helping.

HOCS – Executive looking at revised messaging.

NR – pushing out five free measures for a while. Recognise that Ministers are Listening to industry, query about the current regulations coming in on Monday. Sunset clause needed to be established due to election in May 2022.

HOCS – doing this in real time, we are trying to listen to sectors and build this into regulations.

Peter Luney – no substantive change to the regs. Tweaks have been made following engagement with sectors. Regs will be shared as quickly as possible.

HOCS – summarised the meeting echoing we are in another fast moving period and brought meeting to a close.

ACTION POINTS / OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE:

Action point	Responsibility
Consider joint messaging with sector	EIS

NOTE WRITTEN BY: **NR** DATE: 9 December 2021